

Pottawattamie counties. Christine is a student at Farragut High School and is an active member of the Washington PEP 4-H and the Fremont County 4-H Council.

The purpose of the Region 17 4-H Youth leadership Council is to provide leadership development experience to 4-H and council members. The council works to identify needs, share ideas, and develop a plan of action to help assist the area within Region 17. It is because of leaders like Christine that the 4-H program is so successful in teaching its members valuable life skills that will prepare them for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Christine for being selected to represent 4-H youth throughout southwest Iowa. It is Iowans like Christine that make me proud to represent our great state. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Christine for this outstanding achievement and in wishing her nothing but continued success.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, today, December 17, 2015, I was unable to vote on Roll Call 703.

If I had been present, I would have supported H.R. 2029, the tax extenders portion of the fiscal year 2016 omnibus spending legislation.

I would have voted in favor of this legislation because it includes the extension of critical tax provisions that would help millions of American workers, students, families, and businesses. Critically, the bill makes permanent three key refundable tax credits: the child tax credit, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and the American Opportunity Tax Credit. Combined, these tax credits will help 24 million working families. Additionally, it includes an extension of the research and development tax credit, a vital component of Massachusetts's innovation economy.

However this bill is far from perfect, and I am disappointed that Congress has shunned its obligation to ensure these cuts are offset. I look forward to working with my Republican colleagues in the months ahead to enact comprehensive reform that focuses on job creation and the growth of our middle class.

#### TRIBUTE TO EZRA SCHWARTZ

### HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with the heaviest of hearts that I rise today to take a moment to remember Ezra Schwartz who, at only eighteen, was taken from us all too soon when he was killed just before the Thanksgiving holiday while volunteering in the West Bank. Ezra's grandparents, Mark and Heni Schwartz, have long been involved in New Haven's Jewish community and I am heartbroken for their loss.

Ezra was an extraordinary young man who had his whole life still ahead of him. Memories shared from those from every walk of his life shared a common theme—Ezra's kind heart, generous nature, and passion for making a difference. His vivacious character was contagious. He was dedicated to his family and his community, always striving to enrich the lives of others.

Ezra was an accomplished young man who loved teaching others. His father, Ari, recently recounted the many ways in which he helped his younger siblings as well as his time at New Hampshire's Camp Yavneh last summer, where he won an award for leading campers in the annual sing-off. Ezra's choice to join a yeshiva program, combining service with learning, did not surprise anyone who knew him.

Spending a "gap year" between high school and college studying at an Israeli yeshiva, Ezra was building a deeper connection to his ethnic and religious roots as well as volunteering his time to make a difference in the lives of others. His was a mission of compassion and humanitarianism and he was killed simply because he was Jewish.

Though we may never fully understand why Ezra was taken so soon, his family and friends can take comfort in the full life that he led while he was here. It is an honor and privilege for me to stand today to pay tribute to Ezra Schwartz and his extraordinary young life. I extend my deepest sympathies to his parents, Ari and Ruth; his siblings, Mollie, Hillel, Elon, and Avi; his grandparents, Mark and Heni; as well as his many family and friends at this most difficult time. Well known for his generosity and kind spirit, Ezra will be deeply missed by all of those fortunate enough to have known him and will serve as an inspiration to others to make a difference in this world.

#### TRIBUTE TO LORI STONE

### HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Riverside County, California are exceptional. Lori Stone will be retiring from the March Joint Powers Authority after a distinguished career that spanned over 20 years.

Lori began working with the March Joint Powers Authority (JPA) in 1994 after stepping forward to utilize her local knowledge of military base reuse. She has served as the Executive Director of the JPA since being promoted in 2006. In addition to the 365-acre airport, the JPA oversaw the development of the 1,200-acre Meridian Business Park and over 600 acres of land for future development. Lori described her early days with JPA as a "learn as you go" process because of the lack of precedent with local, state, and federal agencies. Over the years, Lori has forged relationships with the Air Force, Army, Federal Aviation Administration, Navy, and the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist in furthering the goals of the JPA, March Air Reserve Base, and the Inland Empire region.

Lori has amassed a large and impressive list of accomplishments while working as Ex-

ecutive Director of the JPA. She successfully advocated for the passage of federal legislation to authorize a land swap between the Army, Navy and JPA allowing for the redevelopment of an area of March Air Reserve Base to be more comprehensive. Lori helped expand the local foreign trade zone outside of the JPA boundaries to help enhance the region's economic tools. Additionally, Lori spearheaded the US Vets project, securing investments of over \$10 million and locating 7.5 acres for the project. The undertaking will serve more than 100 homeless veterans and their families.

In light of all that Lori has done for the Riverside County community and the March Joint Powers Authority, it is only fitting that she be honored for her many years of dedicated service. Lori's tireless passion for our military and public service has contributed immensely to the betterment of our community. I am proud to call her a fellow community member, American and friend. I add my voice to the many who will be congratulating Lori on the celebration of her retirement.

#### OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$18,798,211,680,628.12. We've added \$8,171,334,631,715.04 to our debt in 6 years. This is over \$8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

#### TRIBUTE TO CRAIG SACKETT

### HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Craig Sackett, of Menlo, Iowa, for earning the American FFA Degree. Craig was recently awarded the degree at the National FFA Convention and Expo in Louisville, Kentucky on October 31st. Craig was a member of the Nodaway Valley FFA Organization and is the son of Jeff and Laurie Sackett.

The American FFA Degree is awarded to members who have demonstrated the highest level of commitment to FFA and made significant accomplishments in their supervised agricultural experience. Craig had to meet certain requirements, such as studying agriculture for three years in high school, earning money in an agriculture field, investing that money into business, participating in community service, and displaying a record of outstanding leadership ability and community involvement. Craig spent four years in high school working towards this ultimate goal, and through his hard work and determination he was able to achieve it.